1	2	3
West Bengal		
1	Upper Kangsabati Reservior	April, 1980
2	Modernisation of Kangsabati Reservior	June, 1983
Union Territories :		
Arunachal Pradesh		
1	Dehang Dam	July, 1984
2	Subansiri Dam	July, 1984

Steps taken for the welfare of the Blind

2624. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:
SHRI S.W. DHABE:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken for the welfare of the blind during the years 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85;

(b) what instruments have been imported for the blind as an aid for reading and for other requirements; and

(c) whether there is any programme for manufacture of such aids in our country; if so, what are the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Government of India have taken the following steps for the welfare of the blind during the year 1982-83, 1983-84 & 1984-85;

Employment

1. 3 per cent vacancies in Central Government and Central Public Sector-Undertakings in Group 'C' and 'D' posts have been reserved for the physically handicapped of which 1 per cent is for the blind persons. According to information received, the number of blind persons appointed in group 'C' and 'D' in Central Government offices and Public Sector Undertakings is as under:—

	Ministries/Departments		Public Sector Undertakings	
	C	D	C	D
1982	20	35	52	40
1983	31	63	26	18
1984	34	26	54	10

2. Jobs which can be performed by blind persons without loss of efficiency have also been identified. 120 different categories of jobs have been identified as suitable for the blind out of a total of about 1100 categories suitable for the handicapped.

3. Age relaxation upto 10 years is available for appointment to posts in Group 'C' and 'D'.

4. Government of India has set up a Central Advisory Committee on Employment under the Chairmanship of Secretary

Social Welfare to oversee the impementation of reservation orders in various Ministries/Departments.

5. 22 Special Employment Exchanges have been set up across the country for the placement of physically handicapped persons, including blind, in gainful employment. During 1982-83, 31 Special Cells in normal employment exchanges were sanctioned to exclusively register and place physically handicapped including the blind in jobs. During the past three years, the number of blind persons given placement by Special Employment Exchanges, Special Cells and normal e xchanges is as follows:-

Year	No. of blind persons placed in employment
1982	652
1983	285
1984	245

6.14 Vocational Rehabilitation Centres have been set up to assess the residual ability of the disabled arrange the training and place them in regular employment. Six skill training workshop have been added those Vocational Rehabilitation Centres. 11 Rural Rehabilitation Centres have been added in order to promote the placement of the handicapped in rural areas. During the past three years, number of blind persons rehabilitated is as follows:—

Year	No. of persons rehabilitated
1982	409
1983	415
1984	532

7. Ministry of Tele-Communications given Public Telephone Booths to handicapped persons including blind persons to help them earn a li ving. Till 31-12-1984, more than 2000 public telephone booths have been given to handicapped persons, including the blind.

8. Loans are available from banks at nominal rates of interest t o enable the handicapped persons including the blind for setting up self-employment ventures.

9. To encourage their employment in public and private sectors, Government of India gives national awards to the most efficient employees and outstanding employers of handicapped including blind.

10. To promote their employment in priate sector, incentive i s given to employers by weighted d eduction of 133 per cent of salaries paid to handicapped emloyees for purposes of income tax rebate.

Education and Training

11. Education is available free blind persons in schools and institutions run by Government of India and State Governments.

12. To assist in securing education, academic technical/professional training or training on the shop floor of industrial establishment, scholarships/stipends are given from 9th class ownards. In addition to the scholarship, reader's allowance is given to blind students. During the past 3 years, the number of blind students given scholarship and the amount spent is as follows:——

Year	No. of Students	Amount spent
		(Rs.)
1982	1307	11·14 lakhs
1983	1865*	18·43 lakhs*
1984	1460*	18·70 lakhs*

*Information for 1983-84 and 1984-85 is partial as it has not been received from some State Governments.

13. Under Integrated Education Scheme, blind children are given following facilities:—

(1) Equipment allowance of Rs. 800|- (to be spend over the period of five years).

(2) Book and stationery allowance of Rs. 400|- per child per year.

(3) Readers' allowance of Rs. 50|- per month.

Hostellers are given free boarding and lodging, if their parents income is less than Rs. 700/-per month.

14. A scheme for granting financial assistance to voluntary organisations to enable the voluntary sector to expand their activities in education training and rehabilitation of disabled persons is administered by the Ministry of Welfare. During the past 3 years; the number of organisations given assistance and the amount spent is as follows:—

Year	No. of organisations for the blind	Amount spent
		(Rs.)
1982-83	32	52·65 lakhs
1983-84	36	50·29 lakhs
1984-85	34	62·13 lakhs

15. Under the Scheme of Aids and Appliances, educational aids for the blind like braille slates were given either free of cost or at 50 per cent of the cost to those whose income was less than Rs. 750|-p.m. and between Rs. 751 and Rs. 1500|-per month. During the past three years the number of blind assisted under this scheme and amount spent is as follows:—

Year	No. of blind assisted	Amount spent
		(Rs.)
1982-83	969	74,47000
1983-84*	217	22,587·00
1984-85*	959	55,741·00

*Information has not been received from all implementing agencies.

National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun

16. The National Institute for the Visually Handicapped set up in 1979 was developed into an apex organisation to deal with development of manpower, research and development of rehabilitation services for the visually handicapped in the country. It has initiated several training and research programmes during the past three years.

Miscellaneous

17. Priority is given in allotment of residential accommodation to blind Government employees enabling them to secure allotment much ahead of their turn.

18. Payment of postage is exempted both inland and foreign for transmission by post of braille literature.

19. Institutions for the blind are permitted to import equipment and apparatus required for education and training of blind free of duty.

20. Central Government blind employees are granted conveyance alowance @ 10 per cent of basic pay subject to a maximum of Rs. 75 per month.

21. Travel concessions are available to blind:—

(1) Upto 50 per cent for travel by Indian Airlines;

(2) 75 per cent travel by Rail; and

(3) Ranging from 50 per cent to free travel by buses of various State Transport Corporation.

(b) The Ministry has not imported any aids for the blind from abroad during this period.

(c) The National Institute for Visually Handicapped, Dehradun, manufactures the following aids:—

(1) Braille slates (2) Abracus (3) plastic Stylus (4) Pocket Frame (5) Braille scales (6) Folding sticks (7) Straight cane (8) Chess Board (9) Playing Cards.